

with unrealistic demands and mandates at prohibitively high prices? Well, basically, the Democrat leadership presents a choice. We can acquiesce to bad regulation that will have certain and disastrous impacts on our economy, or we can legislate an even more harmful system.

Basically, Mr. Speaker, it's as though, when faced with a gun to our heads, we are taking it and opting to shoot ourselves in the chest.

EARTH DAY

(Mrs. DAHLKEMPER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. Mr. Speaker, 39 years ago, then-Senator Gaylord Nelson from Wisconsin established a day on which millions of Americans across the country could demonstrate their support for the most precious resources we have, a healthy, sustainable environment.

For nearly four decades tens of millions of Americans continue on this tradition every April 22, a day we call Earth Day.

I want to acknowledge the commitment and vision of the millions of forward-thinking citizens who use this day to do their part, whether planting a tree, picking up litter, or teaching their children what they can do each day to better the world. Each and every one of these individuals is playing a crucial role as we work to meet the challenges that we all face as a Nation and as a world.

Mr. Speaker, I have always been a proponent of the environment. In fact, I founded and operated the Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park in Erie, Pennsylvania, and I have tried to impart upon my children the important role they can play in meeting the environmental challenges of the 21st century.

In the House of Representatives, I'm proud to continue this work as we take proactive steps to protect our environment and our way of life.

This week we will consider the National Water Research and Development Initiative Act to help improve our environment by securing fresh, clean water for all Americans. To this end, I'm very proud to have attached my amendment that encourages reuse and recycling of our water to promote conservation and sustainability for generations to come.

Thank you to all Americans and those around the world doing their part not only today—Earth Day—but each and every day.

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TEA PARTIES

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today

with a message from a few of my constituents. This scroll is a petition signed by hundreds of Centre County residents who participated in one of the many TEA parties that took place this past week in my district.

Not only do I agree with their message that the Federal Government has overstepped its bounds and continues to spend, tax and borrow too much, but I am proud of these folks who took a stand.

I came to Washington in January to be a part of democracy in action, and today, I can say that I am proud of my constituents who spoke out in their displeasure with this broken process that we call Washington. I am proud that they exercised their first amendment rights.

You see, Mr. Speaker, what occurred this past week is democracy. It's what our forefathers envisioned when drafting the Constitution and, later, the Bill of Rights. It's what our soldiers fight for each and every day. Mr. Speaker, it is the American way.

With that, I thank my colleague from Texas for his assistance.

THE 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL

(Mr. PERLMUTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to recognize and mourn the 10-year anniversary of the Columbine High School tragedy in Littleton, Colorado.

On April 20, 1999, the people of Colorado and across our Nation learned about the senseless act of violence which took 13 lives that day. My friend Congressman COFFMAN represents Columbine High School. I represent an area where many of the families attended Columbine High School. One of my daughters played soccer against a girl who was killed at Columbine. Our neighbors had a nephew who was killed at Columbine. It was a tragedy that affected our community deeply and affected this country deeply; but from a terrible tragedy such as that, with unspeakable evil and violence, we've seen the growth of a community, the coming back together of a community, and we've learned from the families of the victims of this terrible violence.

There is a memorial now built at Clement Park to honor the victims. It is near where I live, and it serves as a reminder of the loss but also of the growth we can develop from that point on. It was a terrible day in Colorado 10 years ago, but if you take a look at the people who have risen from those ashes, so to speak, we have five kids who attended Columbine that year who are now teachers at the high school. There is growth in this country. We deal with evil from time to time, but when we come back together, we are a stronger Nation for it. I know my com-

munity is stronger for the terrible tragedy that we suffered 10 years ago.

TAXPAYER CONSCIENCE PROTECTION ACT OF 2009

(Mr. OLSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was proud to introduce H.R. 1981, the Taxpayer Conscience Protection Act of 2009. This bill would require individual State departments of health to document whether they are providing any Federal funds they receive through Medicaid to organizations that perform, promote or refer for abortions.

No matter where you stand on the questions of life, this bill would protect the fundamental right that every American taxpayer should enjoy and, frankly, should expect—the right to know whether their money is being spent on activities or organizations to which they are morally opposed.

This administration and this Congress have pledged a new era of government transparency. The legislation would bring increased transparency for the millions of pro-life Americans who are currently in the dark regarding whether and how much of their tax dollars are being funneled to abortion providers.

Only by shining the light of day onto this area of government can we ensure that Federal tax dollars do not fund morally objectionable practices.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

(Mr. COSTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 94th anniversary of the start of the Armenian genocide, which was the first genocide of the 20th century. Sadly, that template has been a cycle that continues to this day.

In this case, it was established by history that from 1915 to 1923 the Ottoman Empire systematically killed an estimated 1.5 million Armenians and drove hundreds of thousands of others into exile from their ancestral homeland.

President Obama made promises during his campaign that he would finally recognize the Armenian genocide. It is vital to our Nation and to our foreign policy that we accurately reflect history. My district, in the San Joaquin Valley of California, is home to thousands of Armenian Americans, many of whom are the sons and daughters of survivors. We are quickly approaching the 100th anniversary of the start of the Armenian genocide. I am hopeful we don't have to wait until then to bring justice to my Armenian friends and neighbors.

We know that genocide, sadly, continues to this day. The United States